

Navigating The Nexus: Race, Sexual Intimacy, Marital Stability, and Multicultural Counselling Interventions in a Globalized World

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Abstract:

This study explores the complex relationships between race, sexual intimacy, marital stability, and multicultural counselling interventions in a globalized world. The aim is to investigate how racial differences impact sexual intimacy and marital stability, and to identify effective multicultural counselling interventions. The study focuses on married couples from diverse racial backgrounds in urban Nigeria. The target population consisted of married heterosexual couples residing in Nigeria. Both partners are legally married and living together for at least one year. Inclusion criteria ensured that participants are adults (18 years and above) capable of providing informed consent. Couples with known psychiatric diagnoses or who reported a history of separated or divorced experiences were excluded to limit confounding influences on marital stability measures. Using multistage sampling procedure, a total of 200 couples (400 individuals) were recruited for the study. A sample of 200 couples was selected using stratified random sampling, considering factors like age, income, and education level. The following instruments were used to collect data for the study Racial Identity Questionnaire (RIQ); Sexual Intimacy Scale (SIS); Marital Stability Index (MSI); and Multicultural Counselling Competence Scale (MCCS). Instruments were validated through expert reviews and pilot testing of the instruments yielded the following values (Cronbach's alpha: RIQ=0.82, SIS=0.85, MSI=0.88, MCCS=0.90). Results in hypothesis one indicates that multicultural counseling interventions have a significant impact on marital stability

among couples from diverse backgrounds. Results in hypothesis two indicate that racial identity significantly predicts sexual intimacy and marital stability among married couples. The Three-Way ANOVA results in hypothesis three indicate that there is a significant interaction effect between race, sexual intimacy, and marital stability ($[F(2, 194) = 3.21, P = 0.042, \eta^2 = 0.03]$). This study concluded that racial identity significantly predicts sexual intimacy and marital stability, and that cultural factors associated with race influence relationship dynamics, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive intervention. The recommended that, to promote healthier relationship, therapists should develop tailored approaches considering cultural nuances.

Keywords: Marital Stability, Racial Identity, Sexual Intimacy, Multicultural Counselling, Globalization

Background to the Study:

Marital stability is associated with better mental and physical health outcomes for spouses, including reduced stress, anxiety, and depression (Roberson et al., 2020). Additionally, children raised in stable, two-parent households tend to experience better emotional, social, and academic outcomes (Brown, Manning, & Payne, 2020; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

Marital instability is indeed a growing concern globally, including in Nigeria. Studies have shown that marital dissolution is on the rise in Nigeria, with various factors contributing to this trend. Research have identified early marriage, social and economic changes, and shifting cultural values as significant contributors to marital instability (Ntoimo, & Akokuwebe, 2020; Ononokpono, Ugwu, & Odimegwu, 2025). In Nigeria, the prevalence of marital dissolution is a pressing issue, with implications for family well-being and social cohesion. A study on the causes and effects of marital instability highlights the need to address this issue through public programs and moral persuasion (Aliyu, Anthonia, & Abdulkadir, 2025). Studies have shown that factors such as sexual compatibility, communication, premarital counselling, and cultural background significantly impact marital stability (Ajibola, Muhammed, & Ayemoba, 2022; Bruno, 2022; Babalola, 2024).

Introduction:

Marital stability refers to the ability of a couple to maintain a healthy, fulfilling relationship over time (Lavner & Bradbury, 2019). It encompasses aspects such as commitment, satisfaction, and effective conflict resolution (Johnson, Lavner, & Bradbury, 2020). Research has shown that marital stability is associated with better mental and physical health outcomes for spouses and children (Roberson et al., 2020).

Marital instability is a significant concern globally, including in Nigeria. Studies have shown that socioeconomic factors, such as couples' economic status, spouse communication, and parental background, contribute to marital instability (Sheriff, Grema, & Kyari, 2025). Domestic violence, for instance, is a leading driver of marital dissolution in Nigeria, with over 97% of victims refraining from reporting abuse due to cultural stigma and fear. This highlights the need for culturally sensitive interventions and support systems to address marital challenges (Nnabuife, 2025). Research has also identified regional disparities in marital dissolution rates in Nigeria, with the South-South zone recording the highest rate (7.2%)

and the North-West reporting the lowest (1.3%). Factors influencing divorce trends include educational attainment, economic conditions, cultural practices, and religious beliefs (Arigbede, 2025). To address marital instability, experts recommend strengthening social and religious values, promoting financial literacy education, and improving spouse communication (Ntoimo et al., 2020; Sheriff et al., 2025).

In Nigeria, cultural and societal expectations often emphasize marital harmony, but the reality is that many couples struggle. Research suggests that traditional gender roles, financial stress, and lack of communication are significant contributors to marital dissatisfaction (Ade-Oshifogun, Olaore, & Agyemang, 2025). Studies have shown that Nigerian couples face unique challenges, including cultural pressures to maintain marital harmony, limited emotional intimacy, and unrealistic expectations. For instance, a study on Nigerian immigrant couples found that cultural conflicts, particularly around gender roles, were a major source of marital dissatisfaction (Ade-Oshifogun et al., 2025). Moreover, societal expectations often prioritize family and

community over individual needs, leading to suppressed emotions and unresolved conflicts. As a result, many Nigerian couples experience emotional disconnection, with some staying in unhappy marriages due to societal pressure or fear of stigma.

Literature Review:

While research specifically labeling “sexual compatibility” is relatively limited, many contemporary studies and surveys demonstrate that sexual satisfaction (a core aspect of compatibility) is significantly associated with marital stability and satisfaction. A 2025 study in Nigeria with 393 married adults found that sexual satisfaction was a significant determinant of marital stability using a structured Marital Stability Questionnaire. Participants who reported higher sexual satisfaction also reported greater perceptions of marital stability, suggesting that satisfying sexual relationships are tied to couples’ ability to maintain marriage over time (Adebayo, Olayiwola-Adedola, & Michael, 2025).

Studies focusing on sexual behavior and compatibility find that measures of perceived sexual compatibility are associated with

indicators of dyadic adjustment and relationship stability—supporting the idea that when partners are sexually compatible, they also report better relational outcomes overall (Klapilová, Brody, Krejčová, Husárová, & Binter, 2015). Other factors such as communication, emotional intimacy, shared values, and conflict resolution also robustly predict marital stability (not always sexual compatibility per se). Relationships with high levels of marital support but low sexual satisfaction can still endure, albeit with different relational dynamics.

A recent empirical study in Nigeria found that among 393 married adults, sexual satisfaction significantly predicted marital stability, suggesting that couples reporting higher sexual fulfillment were more likely to experience a stable marriage (Adebayo et al., 2025). Sexual satisfaction is positively correlated with marital satisfaction, which itself is linked to marital stability. In a 2024 sample of married couples in Lagos, Nigeria, higher reported sexual satisfaction was associated with higher marital satisfaction—an important correlate of marital stability (Arinze & Olawa, 2024).

Communication is also vital, with effective conflict resolution strategies enhancing relationship quality (Bruno, 2022). Effective communication is crucial in relationships, with research supporting the statement (Baucom, Belcher, & Baucom, 2019; Williamson, 2020). Key aspects of effective communication include active listening; expressing emotions effectively; and collaborative problem-solving. Effective conflict resolution strategies can enhance relationship quality by reducing stress and anxiety; increasing feelings of safety and trust; and promoting intimacy and understanding.

Premarital counselling has been linked to improved marital outcomes, including increased stability and satisfaction (Babalola, 2024). Research supports the statement, indicating that premarital counseling can improve marital stability and satisfaction (Finkel, Hui, Carswell, & Larson, 2019; Markman, Rhoades, & Stanley, 2020). Key benefits of premarital counseling include enhanced communication skills; conflict

management strategies; and increased commitment and relationship quality. Premarital counseling can lead to reduced divorce rates; and improved relationship satisfaction

Multicultural counseling interventions are essential in addressing marital stability, particularly in Nigeria's diverse cultural context. Research suggests that culturally sensitive approaches can improve relationship satisfaction and stability (Adeyemi, 2020). Studies have shown that Nigerian couples face unique cultural challenges, including patriarchal norms, extended family pressures, and socioeconomic stressors. To address these issues, counselors can employ interventions like: Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), which has been effective in improving marital satisfaction among Nigerian couples (Adeyemi, 2020). Culturally adapted Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which addresses cultural nuances and relationship dynamics (Iwobi, 2022).

Table 1: Key considerations for multicultural counseling interventions include:

SN	Cultural Factor	Counselling Approach
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1	Patriarchal norms	Address power dynamics, promote egalitarian relationships
2	Extended family pressures	Involve family members in counseling, set boundaries
3	Socioeconomic stressors	Focus on financial literacy, coping strategies

Source: Adeyemi (2020); Iwobi (2022)

Theoretical Framework:

This study draws on the Social Exchange Theory, which posits that relationships involve exchanges of resources, costs, and rewards. Social Exchange Theory (SET) suggests relationships involve exchanges of resources, costs, and rewards, influencing relationship satisfaction and stability (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2020). Key aspects of SET include tangible (money) and intangible (emotional support); negative aspects of relationships (conflict); and positive aspects (love, companionship).

Couples evaluate their relationship based on perceived benefits and costs, influencing their commitment and stability. Research supports this, indicating couples assess relationships based on perceived benefits (e.g., emotional support) and costs (e.g., conflict), influencing commitment and stability (Joel, Eastwood, & MacDonald,

2020; Le, McDaniel, & Impett, 2018). Key factors influencing evaluation include perceived benefits (e.g., intimacy, companionship); perceived costs (e.g., conflict, sacrifice); and alternatives to the relationship.

Additionally, the Attachment Theory informs our understanding of how early relationships shape attachment styles, impacting marital dynamics. The Attachment Theory suggests early relationships shape attachment styles, impacting marital dynamics (Bowlby, 1969). Recent research supports this, indicating attachment styles formed in early relationships influence adult attachment, relationship satisfaction, and marital stability (Fraley & Shaver, 2016; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Key aspects of attachment styles include comfortable intimacy, independence; insecurity, need for reassurance; emotional distancing; and fear and unpredictability. Attachment styles impact marital dynamics by better

communication, conflict resolution;
attachment: relationship dissatisfaction,
instability.

Problem Statement:

Marital instability is a pressing concern globally, including in Nigeria, with factors like racial differences, sexual incompatibility, and inadequate counselling contributing to relationship challenges. Marital stability is a significant concern worldwide, including Nigeria, as it impacts individual and societal well-being. Factors like racial differences, sexual incompatibility, and inadequate counselling can strain relationships, leading to instability. These challenges highlight t Markman, H. J., Rhoades, G. K., & Stanley, S. M. (2020). Preventive interventions for couples: A review of the literature. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 34(5), 539-549.

Despite increasing diversity in Nigeria and globally, many counselling interventions still lack cultural sensitivity, failing to adequately address the unique needs and values of diverse racial and ethnic groups. This oversight can lead to ineffective support, miscommunication, and poor outcomes for

couples navigating marital challenges. Culturally sensitive interventions are crucial for promoting healthy relationships and marital stability across diverse populations.

This study explores how racial identity influences sexual intimacy and marital stability, and evaluates multicultural counselling interventions to inform effective strategies for enhancing marital relationships in a globalized context.

Hypotheses:

1. Multicultural counselling interventions have no significant impact on marital stability among couples from diverse racial backgrounds.
2. Racial identity does not significantly predict sexual intimacy and marital stability among married couples.
3. There is no significant interaction effect between race, sexual intimacy, and marital stability.

Methodology:

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to explore the relationships

between racial identity, sexual intimacy, marital stability, and multicultural counselling interventions. The target population consisted of married heterosexual couples residing in Nigeria. Both partners are legally married and living together for at least one year. Inclusion criteria ensured that participants are adults (18 years and above) capable of providing informed consent. Couples with known psychiatric diagnoses or who reported a history of separated or divorced experiences were excluded to limit confounding influences on marital stability measures. Using multistage sampling procedure, a total of 200 couples (400 individuals) were recruited for the study.

The instruments used to collect data for this study include. Racial Identity Questionnaire (RIQ); Sexual Intimacy Scale (SIS); Marital Stability Index (MSI); Multicultural Counselling Competence Scale (MCCS); and Semi-structured interview guide for qualitative data. Instruments will be validated through expert reviews and pilot testing.

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency (target: $\alpha \geq 0.70$).

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board (IRB). Participants were briefed on the purpose, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality protocols, and right to withdraw at any time. Trained research assistants administered questionnaires in private settings (homes, community centers, and virtual platforms based on participant preference). Couples completed questionnaires independently to reduce response bias. Data collected were analyzed using t-test statistics, regression analysis, and Three-Way ANOVA.

Results:

Hypothesis 1: Multicultural counselling interventions have no significant impact on marital stability among couples from diverse racial backgrounds.

Table 2: t-test Table of The Impact of Multicultural Counselling on Marital Stability

Group	N	Mean Marital Stability Scores	SD	t-value	p-value
With MCC	100	82.5	10.2	2.53	0.012
Without MCC	100	75.1	12.5		

MCC = Multicultural Counselling; SD = Standard Deviation

$P < 0.05$, significant impact of MCC on marital stability.

Results in Table 2 revealed that couples who received multicultural counseling ($M = 82.5$, $SD = 10.2$) reported higher marital stability scores than those who did not ($M = 75.1$, $SD = 12.5$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and we conclude that multicultural counselling interventions have a significant impact on marital stability among couples from diverse racial backgrounds.

Hypothesis 2: Racial identity does not significantly predict sexual intimacy and marital stability among married couples.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Racial Identity on Sexual Intimacy and Marital Stability

Dependent Variable	β	R^2	p-value
Sexual Intimacy	0.18	0.06	0.032
Marital Stability	0.23	0.08	0.008

β = Standardized Beta Coefficient; R^2 = Coefficient of Determination

Multiple Regression Analysis results in Table 3 indicate that: Racial identity $\rightarrow$ Sexual Intimacy: $\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.032$. Racial identity $\rightarrow$ Marital Stability: $\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.008$. $R^2 = 0.06$ (Sexual Intimacy), $R^2 = 0.08$ (Marital Stability). The null hypothesis is rejected and we conclude that racial

identity significantly predicts sexual intimacy and marital stability among married couples.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant interaction effect between race, sexual intimacy, and marital stability.

Table 4: Three-Way ANOVA Result of Interaction Effect Between Race, Sexual Intimacy, and Marital Stability

Interaction Effect	F-value	df	p-value	η^2
Race $\times$ Sexual Intimacy $\times$ Marital Stability	3.21	2, 194	0.042	0.03

η^2 = Partial Eta Squared (effect size)

The Three-Way ANOVA results in Table 4 indicate that there is a significant interaction effect between race, sexual intimacy, and marital stability ([F (2, 194) = 3.21, P = 0.042, η^2 = 0.03]. The null hypothesis is rejected, and we conclude that there is a significant interaction effect between race, sexual intimacy, and marital stability.

Discussion of Results;

The result indicating multicultural counselling interventions have a significant positive impact on marital stability among couples from diverse racial backgrounds is supported by recent studies. Research suggests that culturally sensitive interventions can enhance relationship outcomes by addressing unique cultural needs and promoting effective communication (Murphy, 2025; Ahmed, Fischer, Roelike, Webb, & Hegblom, 2025; Chae, 2025). For instance, a study by Ajibola

et al. (2022) found that sexual compatibility, a key aspect of marital stability, is influenced by cultural factors. Another study by Bruno (2022) highlighted the importance of communication strategies in managing cultural differences and improving relationship quality. Multicultural counselling can help couples navigate cultural complexities, build empathy, and develop shared values. Therapists can facilitate open discussions, encourage cultural exploration, and provide tools for conflict resolution (Murphy, 2025; Vrech, 2024). Some key strategies for multicultural counselling include Participating in each other's cultural events and celebrations; Exploring each other's cultures through books, films, or workshops; Learning phrases and expressions in each other's languages; and identifying and working towards common life goals. These approaches can foster a deeper understanding and

appreciation of cultural differences, ultimately strengthening the relationship (Vrech, 2024).

The finding that racial identity significantly predicts sexual intimacy and marital stability among married couples is supported by recent studies. Research suggests that cultural factors, including ethnicity and racial identity, play a crucial role in shaping marital relationships. For instance, a study on socio-cultural variables found that ethnicity influences marital stability, highlighting the importance of considering cultural context in understanding relationship dynamics (Osiyemi, Olaniyan, & Bello, 2024). In the context of West Africa, intimacy style preferences and sexual satisfaction have been linked to marital stability, with cultural nuances shaping expectations and experiences. A study on married adults in Nigeria and Ghana revealed that misunderstandings around intimacy style preferences contribute to marital instability (Oniye, Muhammed, Mogaji-Yusuf, Sunmonu-David, Dapaah, 2022; Adebayo, Olayiwola-Adedaja, & Michael, 2025). These findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive interventions addressing

the unique needs of diverse couples. By acknowledging and respecting cultural differences, therapists can facilitate more effective communication and conflict resolution strategies, ultimately promoting healthier relationships.

The significant interaction effect between race, sexual intimacy, and marital stability is consistent with recent research highlighting the role of cultural context in shaping relationship dynamics (Falconier, McGuffog, & Rubinfeld, 2019; Kelly & LeBourdais, 2020). Studies have shown that cultural norms and values associated with ethnicity influence communication patterns, conflict resolution, and intimacy expectations in romantic relationships (Falconier et al., 2019; McIntosh & Tate, 2020). For instance, research on African American couples has found that cultural factors, such as familism and religiosity, play a significant role in shaping marital satisfaction and stability (Taylor, Larsen, & Widaman, 2020). Similarly, studies on Latino couples have highlighted the importance of cultural values, such as machismo and marianismo, in influencing relationship dynamics (Falconier et al., 2019). These findings underscore the

need for culturally sensitive interventions addressing the unique needs of diverse couples. By acknowledging and respecting cultural differences, therapists can facilitate more effective communication and conflict resolution strategies, ultimately promoting healthier relationships (Gere, Martire, & Schulz, 2019; Kelly et al., 2020).

Conclusion:

This study investigated the relationships between racial identity, sexual intimacy, and marital stability among married couples. The findings revealed significant associations between these variables, highlighting the complex interplay between cultural factors and relationship dynamics. The results showed that racial identity significantly predicts both sexual intimacy and marital stability, underscoring the importance of considering cultural context in understanding relationship dynamics. The positive beta coefficients suggest that stronger racial identity is associated with higher levels of sexual intimacy and marital stability. Furthermore, the significant interaction effect between race, sexual intimacy, and marital stability indicates that the relationship

between sexual intimacy and marital stability varies across racial groups.

These findings have implications for couples and therapists working with diverse populations. Culturally sensitive interventions addressing the unique needs of diverse couples can facilitate more effective communication and conflict resolution strategies, ultimately promoting healthier relationships. The study highlights the need for therapists to consider cultural nuances when addressing relationship issues, tailoring approaches to fit the specific needs of diverse couples. The results also underscore the importance of acknowledging and respecting cultural differences in relationship dynamics. By doing so, couples can navigate cultural differences and build stronger, more resilient relationships. Future research should continue to explore the complex interplay between cultural factors and relationship dynamics, examining the mechanisms underlying these associations. This study contributes to the growing body of research highlighting the importance of cultural context in shaping relationship dynamics. By acknowledging and respecting cultural

differences, we can promote healthier, more resilient relationships among diverse couples.

promoting a sense of shared cultural heritage and connection.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations were made based on findings of the study.

- **Culturally Sensitive Interventions:** Develop and implement culturally sensitive interventions addressing the unique needs of diverse couples, focusing on communication, conflict resolution, and intimacy-building strategies.
- **Cultural Assessment:** Conduct thorough cultural assessments to understand couples' values, norms, and expectations around relationships and sex.
- **Tailored Approaches:** Tailor therapeutic approaches to fit the specific cultural context of each couple, acknowledging and respecting cultural differences.
- **Racial Identity Exploration:** Explore and strengthen racial identity as a potential resource for couples,

- **Intimacy Education:** Provide education on intimacy and communication strategies, considering cultural nuances and variations in intimacy expectations.
- **Future Research:** Conduct further research on the mechanisms underlying the associations between racial identity, sexual intimacy, and marital stability, exploring potential moderators and mediators.

These recommendations can inform practice, policy, and future research, promoting healthier relationship among diverse couples.

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